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Contact: Amy Louviere

Phone: 202-693-9423

Email: louviere.amy@dol.gov

Roof fall accidents remain a leading cause of coal mining injuries *MSHA begins its annual outreach campaign to increase awareness*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Although improvements in roof control technology have led to a significant decrease in accidents related to roof and rib (wall) falls, such accidents are still a leading cause of injuries in underground coal mines, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration.

During 2013, 265 miners were injured in roof and rib falls, down from 377 in 2012. Nearly half of the accidents occurred during the four-month period from June through September. “Even though there was a welcome reduction in the overall number of roof control injuries, too many coal miners are still being hurt on the job in these kinds of accidents,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.



Every year, MSHA undertakes a [Preventive Roof/Rib Outreach Program](#) to increase awareness among miners and mine operators of the hazards of roof and rib falls. The 2014 campaign, which runs through September, will focus on conditions specific to the summer months. For example, clay veins and other moisture-sensitive materials in rock formations in the mine roof are prone to being affected by air and humidity and require additional control measures to prevent mine roof and rib failures.

The agency has developed informational posters, hard hat stickers and lists of best practices, which will be distributed to miners and mine operators during normal inspections. The information also will be used by MSHA inspectors during safety talks with operators and groups of working miners.

In addition, MSHA inspectors are distributing an [Accident Prevention Alert](#) that lists best practices to prevent roof and rib accidents related specifically to retreat mining.

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